

CORSON (H)

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A BRIEF HISTORY  
OF  
PROCEEDINGS  
IN THE  
MEDICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA,  
In the Years 1859, '60, '66, '67, '68, '70 and '71,

TO PROCURE THE  
RECOGNITION OF WOMEN PHYSICIANS  
BY THE  
MEDICAL PROFESSION OF THE STATE.

*By Dr. Hiram Corson.*

TO WHICH IS ADDED AN ACCOUNT OF THE  
MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE SOCIETY  
AT ITS

ANNUAL MEETINGS, IN 1877, '78, '79,  
TO PROCURE A LAW, TO AUTHORIZE TRUSTEES OF HOSPITALS, FOR  
THE INSANE-POOR, UNDER CONTROL OF THE STATE, TO  
APPOINT WOMEN PHYSICIANS

TO HAVE ENTIRE MEDICAL CONTROL OF THE  
INSANE OF THEIR SEX.



PHILADELPHIA:  
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## ERRATUM.

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In printing, the name of the Author,

DR. HIRAM CORSON,

was omitted from the title page.



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THE

## Recognition of Female Physicians by the Medical Profession of Pennsylvania.

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The physicians of Philadelphia and, I may say, of our whole country were greatly opposed to the education of women as physicians, and in various ways impeded them in their efforts to found an institution where women could receive a fair medical education; and when, finally, they found them with a college of their own, and a body of learned and capable instructors—some of whom were men—and that these women physicians were getting “practice” among the most respectable people of the city, they looked about for some efficient means to arrest the dreaded innovation. For this purpose, at an adjourned meeting of the Philadelphia County Medical Society, held November 10th, 1858, the Board of Censors presented the following report:

“In reply to the proposition embraced in the resolutions submitted for their opinion, the Censors respectfully report, that they would recommend the members of the regular profession to withhold from the faculties and graduates of female medical colleges, all countenance and support, and that they cannot, consistently with sound medical ethics, consult or hold professional medical intercourse with their professors or alumni.

Signed,                   D. FRANCIS CONDIE,  
*Sec. Board of Censors Phila. Co. Med. Society.*

R. J. LEVIS,  
*Rec. Sec. Phila. Co. Med. Society.”*

At a meeting of the Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia, in June, 1859, the Philadelphia County Medical Society presented the above report to the state society, which on motion of Dr. Condie was referred to a committee of five persons with



instructions to report before the final adjournment of the society. The following were appointed: Drs. Condie, Philadelphia; Luther, of Berks; Singer, of Perry; Cassidy, of Lancaster; and Worthington, of Chester.

The next day Dr. Worthington, on behalf of the committee, made the following report:

“The committee to whom were referred certain resolutions emanating from the Board of Censors of the Philadelphia County Medical Society, and adopted by the latter, defining the conduct of physicians, so far as consultations are concerned, towards the faculties of female medical colleges, the graduates of those institutions and female practitioners generally, beg leave to report, that after a careful consideration of the said resolutions, and the important ethical questions to which they have reference, the committee believe that the course pointed out by the resolutions is the correct one, and such as demands the sanction of the society, and they would urge its observance by all the county societies throughout the State.

Signed,      D. FRANCIS CONDIE,  
                   WILMER WORTHINGTON,  
                   J. E. SINGER,  
                   MARTIN LUTHER,  
                   P. CASSIDY.”

On motion of Dr. B. H. Coates, of Philadelphia, the report was adopted.

Thus far the opponents of women physicians had met with no opposition, and in accordance with the suggestion recommended by the state society, the report, by the committee of its five members, was sent to all the county societies to be sanctioned by them, after which it was doubtless believed, by its originators and advocates, that no physician, with proper regard for his success in practice, the friendship of his professional brethren, and the honor of the profession, would thereafter hold professional intercourse with female physicians.

No delegate from any of the fourteen county societies, present at the meeting, expressed dissatisfaction with this action of the State society. But the end had not yet come.

At a meeting of the Montgomery County Medical Society, held in Norristown, May 26th, 1860, nine members assembled, viz: Drs. B.

F. Poley, William Corson, Hiram Corson, Lewis W. Read, Jonathan Comfort, Frank Vanartzdalen, William P. Robinson, John Schrack, and Milton Newberry. I give the names, because on the vote of the majority—the first seven—hung an important issue.

The corresponding secretary, Dr. Hiram Corson, offered the following preamble and resolutions :

“WHEREAS, The Philadelphia County Medical Society has passed a resolution forbidding its members to consult with the faculties of female medical colleges, the graduates of these colleges and female physicians generally ; and,

“WHEREAS, The Philadelphia County Medical Society caused that resolution to be presented to the State Medical Society at its last meeting, whereupon a committee was appointed by the state society to report thereon, which committee reported, ‘that they deem the course referred to, by the resolutions of the Philadelphia County Medical Society, is a consistent one, and such as deserves the sanction of the state society, and they would urge its adoption by all the county societies throughout the State’; therefore,

“*Resolved*, That it is with regret that we, the Montgomery County Medical Society, feel ourselves, after a full and free discussion, compelled to dissent from the action of the Philadelphia County Medical Society and the State Medical Society, as we believe the time has fully come when women should not be excluded from the medical profession, but, if properly educated and observant of the code of medical ethics, should receive the same treatment from the male members of our profession as is accorded to the male members thereof ; therefore,

“*Resolved*, That we agree with the eminent Professor Stillé, President of Philadelphia County Medical Society, that there is no intrinsic reason why women should not perform a part of the toils of the art of healing, and that there are, no doubt, three or four brilliant examples in the world, of women who have justly attained high distinction in medicine, and that they achieved that distinction by means of establishments of high character—but while admitting this, we do not agree with him in his refusal to recognize female medical graduates, simply because the colleges in which they were graduated were not the most eminent of medical institutions. It is selfish and unjust to refuse women admission into our best colleges, and then, when by great sacrifice and perseverance, they have graduated at a college of their own establishing, and which compares favorably with many medical colleges for men in different states of the Union—withhold from them our recognition of their rightful rank as members of our profession, if they recognize the code of ethics and act in accordance with its provisions.



*“Resolved, That our delegates be instructed to lay this preamble and these resolutions before the State Medical Society at its next meeting and ask that they have a place in the Minutes of the Society.”*

Such were the opinions of seven of the nine members expressed by their votes that day.

At the meeting of the State Medical Society, held in Philadelphia, in June, 1860, Dr. Hiram Corson, delegate from the Montgomery County Medical Society, read the preamble and resolutions passed by the Montgomery County Society, but was instantly opposed and rebuked by many leading members, from whom he had hoped to have aid in the endeavor to do justice towards women physicians. One voice was raised in our behalf—Dr. John Levergood, of Lancaster, essayed to say a word in behalf of the resolutions, but a motion “to lay them on the table,” made by Dr. Wilmer Worthington, a very influential member from Chester County, prevailed, and thus others, who afterward proved themselves to be friends of women doctors, were debarred from advocating the resolutions presented by the delegates from Montgomery County Medical Society.

Prior to this action, Dr. Levergood had presented a resolution from the Lancaster City and County Medical Society, relative to the graduates of female medical schools, which the President declared out of order. (See Transactions State Medical Society, 1860, p. 15). Whether he had been allowed to read the resolutions does not appear in the Transaction—and in order to know what they were—(as in all subsequent actions of the Lancaster County Medical Society, no county society exhibited more determined opposition to the recognition of women physicians)—while this paper was being prepared, Dr. Levergood was written to for information in relation to the resolution or resolutions, and why they had no place in the Transactions. He reports, that on August 17th, 1859, the Lancaster County Medical Society passed the following preamble and resolution :

“WHEREAS, At the last stated meeting of the Medical Society of Pennsylvania, a resolution was adopted to the effect, that it would be considered inconsistent with sound medical ethics for members of the regular profession to hold professional intercourse with the teachers and alumni of female colleges ; and,

“WHEREAS, Believing such action to have been, not only premature, ill-advised and injudicious, but that it also evinces an amount of prejudice and illiberality not less surprising than reprehensible ; and,

“WHEREAS, Constituting an integral part of the State Medical Society, jealous of its good name, and cordially desirous of seeing its

usefulness enhanced and influence extended, and believing that the passage of the resolution referred to will neither promote the one nor augment the other ; therefore,

*“Resolved,* That the delegates from this society to the next meeting of the state society be, and they are hereby instructed to use all honorable means to secure the repeal of the resolution to which reference has been made.”

After the above had been read by the friends of women physicians in the Lancaster City and County Society, on motion of Dr. John L. Atlee the further consideration of the resolution was postponed until the next meeting of the society, on January 18th, 1860, when it was adopted. Here we see, that despite the powerful influence of Dr. Atlee, the society passed these strong sentiments in favor of the recognition of women physicians, yet the State society refused to hear them, and the efforts of Dr. Levergood, Dr. Joseph Brinton, and others, who would have willingly aided in doing justly by the women doctors, were from that time made of no effect by the dominant influence of one who finally, after years of opposition, voted for their recognition. To return from this digression :

After the resolutions of the Montgomery County delegate had been disposed of by a vote “to lay on the table,” and the society had adjourned, the delegate, who had dared to offer them, was surrounded by the indignant members of the state society—some indignant, some contemptuous, some appealing to him not to disturb the harmony of the society—after hearing all they could offer in justification of their opposition, and their repeated declarations, “that they were opposed to the admission of women physicians because some of the teachers were irregular practitioners, and not because of their sex,” he presented, as a test of their sincerity, the following preamble and resolutions :

“WHEREAS, A difference of opinion prevails among the members of the state society in relation to the meaning and binding force of its action relative to female practitioners and professors of female medical colleges ; therefore,

*“Resolved,* That this society does not forbid its members to consult with female practitioners merely on account of their sex, nor with the professors of female medical colleges, simply because they are engaged in teaching the sex, but because the latter are irregular practitioners and the former have not been educated in regular medical col-



leges, and do not conform to the code of medical ethics. When females shall be instructed by well qualified and legitimate teachers and shall conform to the medical code established by the National Society, we will cheerfully accord to them all the courtesies and rights which we accord to male practitioners ; therefore,

*“Resolved,* That the State society by the approval which it gave to the action of the Philadelphia County Society, in relation to female practitioners and the professors of female medical colleges, does not desire to be understood as adding a new article to the code of medical ethics, which shall be binding on societies in other counties, but simply to acknowledge the right of Philadelphia County Society to pass such a law for the government of its own members.”

This gave rise to an active discussion. While the question was still pending, on motion of Dr. Thomas, of West Chester, the society adjourned to Friday morning at 10 o'clock. At the afternoon session “the preamble and resolutions of Dr. Corson, under consideration at the time of adjournment, were called up for consideration.” Dr. Nebinger then offered the following substitute:

*“Resolved,* That it is the sense of this society, that members of the regular profession cannot, consistently with sound medical ethics, consult or hold professional intercourse with the professors or graduates of female medical colleges, as at present constituted, inasmuch as some of the professors are irregular practitioners and all of these colleges are ineligible to representation in the American Medical Association.”

Further opposition seemed to our delegate useless in the presence of the manifest determination of the disturbed and provoked assembly, and the substitute of Dr. Nebinger was adopted.

Before the next meeting of the state society the war of the rebellion was upon us and further proceedings were, during that terrible war, in abeyance.

In June, 1866, the meeting of the state society was held in Wilkesbarre. As our delegate from the Montgomery County Society was on his way to the meeting he was doubtful whether he could get any one to second his resolution to rescind the action of the state society ; but on entering the cars he was pleased to see one of the Montgomery County delegates, and got him to consent to second the resolution. There were many delegates from Philadelphia County Society on the train, and after they had got hold of our member, he returned



to our delegate, Dr. H. Corson, and informed him that if he could get some one else to second the resolution he would prefer that he do so. We mention this merely to show how strong was the sentiment against our work. Dr. Winthrop Sargent, then of West Philadelphia, but once a member of Montgomery County Medical Society, was asked—after the resolutions intended to be offered to the society were read to him—and he at once agreed to second them.

Thus prepared to renew the appeal for justice to women physicians, at the earliest opportunity after the opening of the meeting, our delegate—who through a friend had previously obtained from the President a promise of fair opportunity to advocate his measures—offered, in behalf of his clients shall I say?—the following appeal and resolutions, obtained from the officials of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, in the hope that he would be able to read them before the State society to advantage.

*To the Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania:*

The Corporators and Faculty of the Female Medical College of Pennsylvania would respectfully ask of the State Medical Society the repeal of certain resolutions passed at its Annual Session in 1859, in reference to women practitioners in medicine; and which is as follows:

“*Resolved*, That it is the sense of this society that members of the regular profession cannot, consistently with sound medical ethics, consult or hold professional intercourse with professors or graduates of female medical colleges, as at present constituted, inasmuch as some of the professors are irregular practitioners, and all of these colleges are ineligible to representation in the American Medical Association.”

“The said corporators and faculty would state that the college they represent, now the only one in Pennsylvania at which women are educated as physicians, is a regular school, and has adopted, in reference to the qualifications of its graduates, the standard of the oldest and best medical colleges of the country.

“They would also remind the society, that for years women have been successfully practising medicine, that the demand for their services is steadily increasing, and that they are sustained mainly by the best classes in the community.

“They would further say, that while a large portion of those recognized as leading physicians practically ignore these resolutions, their existence is, nevertheless, a fruitful source of annoyance and

injury to patients and physicians, as well as a seeming imputation upon the liberality and humanity of a noble profession.

T. MORRIS PEROT,

*President of the Board of Corporators.*

JOSEPH JEANES,

*Secretary Board of Corporators.*

ANN PRESTON, M. D.,

*Dean of the Faculty.*

EMELINE H. CLEVELAND,

*Secretary of Faculty."*

PHILADELPHIA, June 8, 1866.

Having thus presented the appeal from the Woman's Medical College, our delegate said he had letters from distinguished men which he would read in behalf of the appeal, and began to read one from the eminent Dr. William Darlington, when he was at once interrupted by excited and noisy opposition, followed by a call to order by one of his warmest friends from Philadelphia. The President, however, declared the speaker in order, and the reading of Dr. Darlington's letter in favor of the recognition of women physicians was continued. When that was ended, the delegate—still having the floor—presented the following :

"WHEREAS, At a meeting of this society, held in Philadelphia, June, 1860, the following resolution was passed, viz :

"*Resolved*, That it is the sense of this society that members of the medical profession cannot, consistently with sound medical ethics, consult or hold professional intercourse with the professors or graduates of female medical colleges, as at present constituted, inasmuch as some of the professors are irregular practitioners, and all of their colleges ineligible to membership in the American Medical Association;" therefore,

*Resolved*, That the above resolution be and is hereby rescinded.

Dr. Maybury, of Philadelphia, immediately moved to lay the resolution of Dr. Corson on the table, which, on a call of yeas and nays, was decided in the negative, and the discussion went on attended with much excitement; with many speakers in opposition to the author of the resolution and his obnoxious papers, which he was compelled to defend without aid from any one. The friends of women doctors on whose aid he relied and of which, from the begin-

ning, he had been assured would have been given had they been present in 1860, had not yet arrived. After a heated discussion for an hour, or more, an adjournment took place for supper. Just then, too, arrived by the train, Dr. Traill Green, who had been most anxiously looked for by our delegate, accompanied, too, by Dr. Washington Atlee, both ready and eager for the battle; and before the society re-assembled for the evening session, Dr. Ezra P. Allen, of Bradford County, volunteered for the defence of the resolution.

At 8 P. M., the society was again in session, and Dr. Corson called up the resolution which was being discussed at the close of the afternoon session. The noisy opponents of the resolution had, then, a real surprise. Instead of the single advocate, the mover of the resolution, they encountered Prof. Traill Green, of Easton, Pa., warmed for the fight, uncompromising with the foe and skilled in debate; Dr. Washington Atlee, who loved justice, courted battle with wrong, and was a stranger to fear; and Dr. Ezra P. Allen, cool, calm and logical, and stimulated by his abiding sense of justice, one after the other advocated the passage of this resolution, as a matter of justice due to women. The negative was maintained by Drs. Maybury, Hatfield and others. After much discussion, on motion, the yeas and nays were called on the motion to *rescind*, and were as follows:

*Yeas*—Silas M. Benham, John Sample, T. W. Shaw, W. J. Gilmore, E. P. Allen, Geo. F. Horton, R. Leonard, A. A. Zeigenfuss, J. Seiler, W. Herbst, E. G. Martin, J. S. Crawford, Traill Green, Hiram Corson, W. L. Atlee, Winthrop Sargent, C. C. Halsey, I. Newton Evans, D. L. Beaver, J. A. Laross, F. B. Poley, Wm. B. Atkinson, Wm. Anderson; total 23.

*Nays*—James King, G. W. Smith, J. M. Gemmil, D. W. Bonebreak, D. W. Montgomery, H. C. Harrison, John Curwen, P. J. Roebuck, J. M. Dunlap, Geo. Urquhart, E. R. Mayer, J. E. Singer, Joseph Schwartz, J. H. Case, Jas. Cummysky, Thos. Hay, A. G. B. Hinkle, J. Solis Cohen, J. H. Smaltz, J. T. Carpenter, James McConaughy, N. L. Hatfield, Jacob F. Treichler, W. L. Richardson, Wm. Maybury, R. B. Mowry, James R. Lewis; total 27.

After this vote had been taken, and had resulted in showing that the advocates for justice to women physicians were rapidly increasing in numbers, and after some other business was disposed



of Dr. Mowry, of Allegheny City, of the opposition, offered the following:

"*Resolved*, That the resolution of 1860 (previously discussed), is not intended to prevent the members of the society from consulting with regularly educated female physicians, who observe the code of ethics."

After this was seconded, Dr. Maybury offered the following, which was seconded by Dr. Mowry, and unanimously adopted:

"*Resolved*, That the resolution offered by Dr. Mowry, be referred to the several county societies of the State, to report thereon at the next meeting of the State society."

Thus ended the stormy discussion of the subject in the meeting of 1866.

In June, 1867, the society convened at Pittsburgh. The special order was the reception of reports from county societies, on the resolution of Dr. Mowry, adopted at Wilkes-Barre in the preceding year, as directed by resolution of Dr. Maybury. The reports were as follows:

1. *Allegheny County* "is in favor of Mowry's resolution."

2. *Beaver*—"In favor."

3. *Berks*—"Instructs her delegates to vote negatively on any resolution that may be introduced, which does not require females to recognize and enforce the code of ethics, and give the same evidence of fitness as is required of males."

4 and 5. *Blair and Bradford*. No action.

6. *Bucks*—"Leaves it with the delegates."

7 to 13. *Butler, Chester, Clarion, Cambria, Cumberland and Crawford*. No action.

15, 16, 17. *Eric, Westmoreland, Schuylkill*. Against.

18. *Indiana*—"Instructs her delegates to vote unanimously against it."

19, 20, 21. *Luzerne, Perry and Washington*. No action.

22, 23, 24. *Lycoming, Susquehanna and Northampton*. In favor.

25. *Lancaster* was "instructed to vote unanimously against this, and all resolutions recognizing women as members of the medical profession.

26. *Philadelphia* reports, "That, we cannot offer any encouragement to women to become practitioners of medicine, nor can we consent to meet in medical consultation such practitioners.

27. *Montgomery*—"Instructs her delegates to use all honorable means to place respectable female graduates, and the professors in colleges, on an equality with male graduates, and the professors in colleges for males."

On motion, of Dr. Anawalt, the reports were accepted. He then "moved the indefinite postponement of the whole question. Dr. Atlee, of Philadelphia, addressed the society in favor of women physicians. Dr. Haldeman then moved to lay the whole subject on the table;" which was done by a rising vote of 55 yeas to 29 nays. Dr. Washington Atlee then offered the following paper:

"At a meeting of the Board of Corporators of the Woman's (late female) Medical College, held May 8th, 1867, the following resolutions were adopted.

"*Resolved*, That the corporators of the college again request, of the State Medical Society, the *repeal* of certain resolutions passed in 1859-60, in reference to consultation with the teachers and graduates of medical colleges for women.

"*Resolved*, That as the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, in its teachings and practices, observes the recognized code of medical ethics; and as its teachers possess the esteem and confidence of the public, the corporators feel bound to ask as a matter of justice, that a course of action, so repugnant to the moral sentiment of the general community, shall no longer be sustained by the Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania; therefore,

*Resolved*, That a copy of the foregoing resolution, signed by the president and secretary of this board, be forwarded to the next meeting of the State society, to be held June 12, 1867.

Signed,

T. MORRIS PEROT,

*President of the Board of Corporators.*

ISAAC BARTON,

*Secretary of the Board of Corporators."*

Dr. Nebinger, of Philadelphia, "moved to lay the paper on the table"—which was done by a rising vote of 49 yeas to 33 nays. Thus ended the struggle of 1867.

At the next meeting of the society, in Harrisburg, in June 1868, by previous arrangement among the friends of women physicians, Dr. W. L. Atlee offered the following:

"WHEREAS, The only disqualifications of a member of the medical profession, under our constitution, are irregular medical education,

want of good moral and professional standing, and non-observance of the code of medical ethics, and,

WHEREAS, All laws regulating consultations, based on ethnological, physiological and psychological distinctions are against the spirit and letter of our constitution; therefore,

*"Resolved, That any former action of this society, making distinctions and qualifications, not recognized by the code of ethics, be and the same is hereby repealed."*

After a long discussion by Drs. Atlee, Mowry and Boker, Dr. Nebinger, after a long speech, resorted to his usual tactics, "a motion to lay on the table," in order to prevent replies to the three speakers in opposition to Dr. Atlee; but after earnest appeals by Drs. Hiram Corson, James King and Wilmer Worthington, he withdrew the motion, and the discussion was continued by King, Corson and Horton, on the one side, Nebinger, John Atlee, Haldeman, Maybury and Anawalt, on the other.

On closing his speech Dr. Anawalt offered the following amendment, viz.: "That the national code of ethics is sufficient for the government of professional intercourse at present, and, therefore, more stringent rules are unnecessary."

This amendment was negatived by a vote of 35 yeas to 37 nays. Then the vote being taken on Dr. Atlee's resolution, it was lost by a vote of 38 yeas to 46 nays. Thus ended the efforts made in 1868.

The yeas and nays on Dr. Atlee's resolution were:

*Yeas*—Drs. Mowry, Gallaher, King, Foster, Asdale, Allen, Horton, Collins, Townsend, Worthington, Price, Bradley, Simington, Curwen, Dock, Schultz, J. L. Atlee, Trout, J. A. Miller (Lancaster), J. B. Crawford (Luzerne), Whitney, Corson, McChesney, Calvin, Best, Greenlee, McKennan, Wilson, Haldeman, Lenher, Robinson, Dale, J. A. Miller, J. S. Crawford, Findley, Hillyer, W. L. Atlee, Green; total 38.

*Nays*—Drs. Shearer, Wallace, Jordan, Langfitt, Feicht, Ross, Coulter, McReynolds, Rahter, J. P. Seiler, Stewart, W. M. Wallace, Loop, Strickland, Bennett, Martin, Clemens, Reichard, Breinig, Cummysky, Fish, Boker, Duglison, Cohen, Bolles, Stetler, Matter, Galbraith, Row, Roehler, Carpenter, Blockley, Gillet, R. Crawford, Grove, Zitzer, Day, Christ, Annawalt, Maybury, Anderson, Lewis, Linderman, Treichler, Nebinger and Schrack; total 46.



The year 1869 passed without anything being attempted in the meeting of the State society, on the subject of the recognition of women physicians by the profession. But in order to show that the previous efforts of those favorable to recognition had not modified the feelings of the Philadelphia County Medical Society, and to put on record their solemn resolutions in relation to any professional intercourse with women doctors and those who teach them, or consult with them, we append the following:

At the stated meeting of the Philadelphia County Medical Society, held April 21, 1869, the following was unanimously adopted:

“WHEREAS, It is well known that some of the members of this society are holding professorships in the Woman’s Medical College of Pennsylvania, or occupying the position of consulting surgeon, or physician in the Woman’s Hospital of Philadelphia, or holding consultations with the professors or graduates of the above institutions, in violation of the rules and regulations of this society; and

WHEREAS, It is believed that some of the members so offending are not aware of the passage of the resolution, by this society, at the stated meeting in October last, upon this subject; therefore

*Resolved*, That the Recording Secretary be hereby instructed to furnish a printed copy of the above referred-to resolution to every member of this society, with the request that those who are holding professional intercourse with the Woman’s College of Pennsylvania, or with the Woman’s Hospital of Philadelphia, or with the graduates of the former, will either purge themselves of this violation of the rules and regulations of this society, or resign their membership of the same.

The following is the resolution referred to above, which was adopted October 21, 1868, by Philadelphia County Medical Society:

*Resolved*, That it is the sense of this society that the preamble and resolutions, adopted by it in regard to female colleges, their professors and graduates, from becoming members of this society, and further, that the accepting and filling of any professional chair, in a female college, by a member of this society, disqualifies him for active continued membership of this body; and furthermore, that the essence and sense, of the preamble and resolution referred to, deny the members of this society the right to professionally consult with any professor or graduate of a female college.”

Attest, WILLIAM B. ATKINSON,  
Recording Secretary.

This action was taken, it is believed, to deter some eminent Philadelphia physicians and surgeons, who were, in defiance of the action of the society, consulting with women physicians, from continuing to do so—especially was it aimed at Prof. Alfred Stille, Dr. W. L. Atlee and Dr. Albert H. Smith.

This finality, as the County Medical Society regarded it, like the *finality* of our Congress, years ago, in relation to slavery, when the abolitionists were asking for the freedom of the slaves, did not settle the question, and, at the meeting of the State Medical Society in June, 1870, in Philadelphia, an appeal and resolution from the Woman's Medical College, were presented by Dr. W. L. Atlee; but by request, action on them was suspended for the present. At a later stage they were brought forward, and were as follows:

“WHEREAS, The past action of the Medical Society of Pennsylvania towards the Woman's Medical College, originated in consequence of its alleged irregular organization; and

WHEREAS, The Woman's Medical College is now organized on the same basis as other colleges recognized by this society; therefore,

*Resolved*, That the State society hereby withdraws its objections to the Woman's Medical College of Philadelphia, as at present constituted, and rescinds the resolution affecting that institution and the status of female practitioners of medicine of good standing, and who observe the code of medical ethics of the American Medical Association.

After much discussion, by Drs. J. L. Atlee, of Lancaster; Hamilton, Stetler and Maybury, of Philadelphia, against the resolution; and Dr. Corson, of Montgomery County, in support of it, the society adjourned until Friday.

On assembling on Friday, Dr. Joseph Parrish, of Delaware County, offered the following *substitute* for Dr. Atlee's resolutions pending from yesterday:

WHEREAS, The College of Physicians of Philadelphia and the American Medical Association, acknowledge a common code of ethics as the standard of intercourse between members of the medical profession and the community, and

WHEREAS, Said code is generally received as the sufficient rule of professional conduct, by most of the county societies of this State as well as by the profession at large; therefore,

*Resolved*, That all action of this society which has imposed, upon its members, restrictions that are not required by the common code,

which is acknowledged by the entire medical profession of the continent, is in our opinion unwise and unnecessary, and all such action *is hereby rescinded*.

In concluding, Dr. Parrish stated that those who advocated the recognition of women had agreed upon the substitute. This did not, however, suit the opponents, and Dr. Cumisky, of Philadelphia, "moved to lay it on the table;" which motion was lost by 36 yeas to 42 nays. After which, the substitute was adopted by a rising vote of yeas 46, nays 42. Drs. Nebinger and Maybury, then called for the yeas and nays; the roll was called and resulted as follows: yeas 57, nays 53.

The question now coming up on the adoption of the resolution as amended by this substitution, Dr. Weidman, of Berks County, offered as an amendment—

*Resolved*, That the resolution substituted by Dr. Parrish, for that of Dr. Atlee, be referred to the county societies with instructions to report thereon at the next meeting of this society.

Dr. Stetler, of Philadelphia, offered a further amendment to this, which the president decided out of order. Dr. Stetler appealed, the chair was not sustained; and Dr. Stetler then withdrew his amendment.

The vote was then taken on Dr. Weidman's amendment, and it was rejected. Much discussion was had upon these subjects, until Dr. Nebinger, "moved that the question be laid on the table until the American Medical Association shall have decided upon it."

Upon this resolution the yeas and nays were called, and resulted as follows:

*Yeas*—Drs. A. M. Pollock, T. P. Vankirk, T. W. Shaw, W. F. Knox, G. W. Langfitt, R. C. Foulke, R. W. Christy, J. Fay, H. Clarke, D. Murray, Weidman, J. F. Ross, M. B. Mosser, Z. P. Zeigler, J. Lowman, J. M. Allen, H. F. McGowan, W. D. Martin, J. R. Umberger, H. B. Buchler, D. C. Keller, C. P. Bigelow, A. Nebinger, W. M. Welsh, A. G. B. Hinkle, W. L. Knight, G. Hamilton, N. L. Hatfield, Nathan Hatfield, J. H. Smaltz, J. G. Stetler, J. Aitken Meigs, T. J. Yarrow, J. R. Wells, J. Bell, A. M. Slocum, G. P. Sargent, P. B. Brienig, Henry Carpenter, L. H. Laidley, N. Packer, J. S. Carpenter, J. W. Donges, W. B. Erdman, S. D.



Gross, W. Maybury, W. H. Panceast, W. B. Atkinson, L. Turnbull, H. St. Clair Ash, J. Cummysky, R. J. Dungleison, A. Fricke, W. H. Bunn, J. D. Ross, J. H. Hebner, C. S. Boker, J. G. Maxwell, S. R. Morris, A. S. Jordan, A. H. Fish, D. M. Cheston, W. M. Wallace, *President*; total 62.

*Nays*—Drs. W. J. Gilmore, J. Semple, T. J. Gallaher, W. N. Miller, G. D. Bruce, W. B. Heslep, W. S. Husleton, R. L. Walker, H. T. Coffey, J. C. Maggini, Edward Mills, G. F. Horton, T. S. McPherson, H. Nye, C. Irwin, B. Thompson, T. C. Cox, R. L. Sibbett, W. F. Robinson, T. R. Hull, W. H. Bradley, J. P. Morrell, W. B. Ulrich, C. A. Rahter, W. Varin, T. D. Myers, J. P. McVicker, W. L. Atlee, H. Lenox Hodge, William Corson, Traill Green, G. Underwood, J. L. Atlee, F. F. Davis, G. B. N. Swayze, T. McKennan, J. K. Wilson, W. R. Findley, Hiram Corson, J. Curwen, I. N. Kerlin, Joseph Parrish, I. N. Evans, Benjamin Lee, T. F. Oakes, J. S. Crawford, T. Lyon, E. Hellyer; total 48.”

Thus ended the battle of 1870, resulting in defeat to the friends of women physicians, but with our men “well in hand,” and confident of coming victory.

It was a pet scheme with the opposition to have the American Medical Association to give judgment on this subject. They desired to have the association to forbid, peremptorily, any member of the profession from consulting with women physicians, or their teachers, under certain unpleasant penalties. This resolution of Dr. Nebinger was supposed to be an estoppel to further agitation, until the association had declared its will. Not so with the friends of progress—the forty-eight who had voted against it; they parted to meet again the next year to wage anew the combat.

June 14, 1871. The opposing forces were again on hand at Williamsport. *Dr. Traill Green* “moved to rescind the resolution adopted at the session in 1860,” as follows:

“*Resolved*, That it is the sense of this society, that members of the regular profession cannot consistently, with sound medical ethics, consent to hold professional intercourse with the professors, or graduates of female medical colleges as at present constituted, inasmuch, as some of the professors are irregular practitioners, and all of these colleges are ineligible to representation in the American Medical Association.”

Thus we found ourselves in 1871, with the same resolution before us that had been presented by the Montgomery County delegate, to the society at Wilkes-Barre, June, 1866; but how different the situation! Then, it was in the face of noisy, insulting opposition that its mover was allowed to speak in favor of rescinding the obnoxious resolution; now, at Williamsport, the forces, through changes effected by the lapse of years and the labors of the friends of reform, meet in nearly equal numbers, prepared to do their best for victory. The question being on Dr. Green's motion, Dr. J. Solis Cohen, of the Philadelphia combatants, moved a *proviso* to the resolution to rescind, viz.: "That nothing in the passage of this resolution shall be so construed, as to commit the medical society of Pennsylvania to acknowledge the right of women's medical colleges, and associations of female physicians to representation in this society."

To those of us in favor of the resolution to rescind, this proviso was laughable, inasmuch as the State society is composed only of delegates from county societies—not even the University of Pennsylvania, or Jefferson Medical College being able to send a delegate. The friends of women physicians were therefore ready to admit it, and after a free discussion, Dr. Green's *resolution to rescind*, with the proviso attached, was passed by a vote of 55 yeas to 45 nays, amid intense but quiet excitement.

*Ayes*—W. H. Daly, T. W. Shaw, J. E. Jackson, J. A. Brobst, L. De B. Kuhn, D. A. Ulrich, J. D. W. Henderson, John Fay, W. R. Findley, E. P. Allen, R. H. Ely, W. Worthington, J. P. Hassler, J. R. Priestly, J. D. Strawbridge, W. M. Bickly, W. H. Magill, T. J. Swisher, P. M. Senderling, John Curwen, J. E. Bulkley, J. B. Crawford, Joseph Parrish, J. Boon, F. R. Graham, S. G. Lane, B. Leaman, J. S. Crawford, E. Lyon, Sam'l Pollock, S. S. Smith, J. P. McVicker, J. B. Livingston, S. M. Ross, J. Schrack, Wm. Corson, Hiram Corson, Traill Green, W. R. Cisna, W. L. Atlee, C. S. Boker, T. M. Drysdale, C. Færstige, Benjamin Lee, Winthrop Sargent, A. H. Halberstadt, U. Long, C. S. Reagan, S. Birdsall, W. L. Richardson, C. K. Thompson, W. W. Webb, J. R. Arter, T. W. Egbert, B. Gillett—55.

*Nays*—A. M. Pollock, W. F. Knox, J. H. Snodgrass, W. M. Weidman, D. S. Hays, S. B. Kieffer, E. B. Brandt, W. M. Wallace, W. S. Throckmorton, J. W. Hughes, W. D. Martin, J. H. Roebuck,

J. F. M. Forwood, A. Craig, A. C. Treichler, M. P. Morrison, W. H. H. Miller, A. F. Clark, H. D. La Cossett, S. S. Merhard, J. Swartz, L. K. Baldwin, L. S. Boller, W. H. Bunn, Horace Y. Evans, A. H. Fish, A. Fricke, N. Hatfield, D. O. Crouch, S. L. Blackley, J. A. Landis, A. G. B. Hinkle, W. H. Pancoast, W. C. Phelps, J. G. Stetler, *S. D. Gross*, W. B. Atkinson, H. St. Clair Ash, A. Nebinger, J. F. Treichler, S. W. Dayton, H. A. Phillips, R. B. Smith, R. Crawford, R. V. Wilson—45.

Thus ended successfully the movement originated by Montgomery County Medical Society, to blot from the transactions of the State society, a selfish, odious resolution adopted eleven years before.

The members of the Philadelphia Medical Society little dreamed that their efforts to prejudice the State society, against women doctors, would be turned against them, and end in their discomfiture. Their action, and the subsequent action of the State society, enabled any County society to canvass their acts, without being liable to the imputation of originating the disturbing subject. Both societies had brought it forward, hence we were justified by their own acts.

Detailed as is this report, it gives but the faintest idea of the bitterness of the contest; of the scorn, with which the proceedings of the Montgomery County Medical Society were received, and the unkindness manifested against all who from year to year asked for justice to women physicians.

In looking back over these years of strife, and congratulating the Woman's Medical College on the results, we are impelled to ask, what would now be the status of women physicians, had not the blunder of the Philadelphia Medical Society been committed?



A Brief Account of the Measures Taken to Procure a Law, to Authorize  
Trustees of Hospitals for the Insane to Employ Women Physi-  
cians to Have Charge of the Insane of Their Sex.

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The State Medical Society had been so disturbed by the annual trouble relating to the recognition of women physicians, that we were content to have a season of quiet, so that harmony might be restored; but so insulting was the conduct of medical teachers and students in Philadelphia, to the women doctors, in keeping them from attending hospital clinics, that further inaction, on our part, seemed ignoble tameness, and therefore, at the annual meeting of the State Society held in Harrisburg, in June, 1877, there was read by Dr. Washington Atlee, for Dr. Hiram Corson—who was detained at home by sickness—a preamble and resolution which he had hoped himself to present.

It may here be stated that several persons who were asked to present the paper, in the name of its author, declined to do so, because of their asserted belief that women were not fitted for the duties—the real cause for their action being a reluctance to introduce a measure likely to meet with great opposition from the superintendents of hospitals. Dr. Washington L. Atlee, on being asked to offer the paper, at once consented to do it. The preambles and resolution were as follows:

“WHEREAS, The State Medical Society has taken a deep interest in the welfare of the insane, during the last few years, as is evidenced by the efforts which it has put forth for the founding of hospitals; and

“WHEREAS, The inmates of our State hospitals are in nearly equal numbers of the sexes; and

“WHEREAS, We have many female physicians who are eminent practitioners, and one, at least,\* who has had experience in the medical management of the insane;” therefore,

“Resolved, That a committee of three persons be appointed by the President of this society to report at its meeting, to be held in Pitts-

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\* Dr. Mary H. Stinson, of Norristown, Pa.

burgh next May, 1878, on the propriety of having a female physician, for the female department of every hospital for the insane, which is under the control of the State."

Such was the resolution; but Dr. Washington L. Atlee, who kindly agreed to offer it in the absence of the author—and after several others had declined to do it—thought the author intended to ask for only a female *assistant to the superintendent*,—not for a female *chief* to have the entire charge—and so it is recorded in the "*transactions*." There was some opposition to the resolution, but it was allowed to pass, under the belief of the opponents, as privately expressed by one of them, that it was "only another of the crazy whims of its author, and would amount to nothing;" and so the committee was appointed.

In accordance with usage, the author of the resolution became chairman, and, strange it was, if not intentional, that Dr. Andrew Nebinger, the champion speaker, for several years, against the recognition of women physicians by the profession, was placed on the committee; Dr. Sibbett, of Carlisle, whose views on the subject were not known, being the third member.

Thus, was the first step successfully taken. It was a success scarcely expected by the author of the resolution. He expected but little more, at that meeting, than to open the subject—to awaken an interest in it, to be renewed at its next meeting; and so on from year to year, until the object should be accomplished.

From the composition of this committee, it was apparent to the chairman, that the duty before him was not a light one. He felt that, in all human probability, the report of his associates would be against him; and his own report—what could he say, in *that*, of the capacity of women to manage institutions, containing hundreds of insane females—institutions which had always been under the care of male superintendents—supposed to be a peculiar class of physicians, whose chief study had been for many years, the proper management of insane people? A class distinct from even experienced physicians in ordinary practice, who, however distinguished in their profession, were not regarded by either the public, or the members of our profession, as being qualified to have medical charge of the insane. If then, these experienced male physicians in private practice, were not thought to be competent to these duties, now sought by us to be bestowed on inexpe-

rienced women doctors, what facts, what precedents, what arguments can the chairman of the committee embody in his report that shall bring conviction to the members of the State Medical Society, at its meeting next year, that this measure, so unprecedented, so foreign to all previous views of proper management of insane people, shall be accepted by them?

This was the question that presented itself to the mind of the chairman of the committee, and the answer to which he most earnestly sought; and which may now be found embodied in the report submitted by the committee in the meeting of the society at Pittsburgh, the following year, 1878, and which is as follows:

By resolution of this society we were appointed to report on "the propriety of having an assistant female superintendent for the female department of every hospital for the insane under the control of the State." It was not the intention of the originator of the resolution to ask for a female assistant, but as the gentleman who kindly agreed to present it to the society, in the absence of the author, supposed that to be his intention and inserted the word assistant, we are bound to regard the subject as presented. While we should regard the substitution of a female assistant in the female department, in place of the young male assistant, to be a great step in the right direction, an inestimable gain to the suffering inmates, we believe it would not be the full measure of reform needed. Of the many hospitals for the insane in the United States only one, so far as we know, has at any time tried a female assistant. At Worcester, Mass., during five years one of our most accomplished and efficient female physicians\* had charge of her sex under direction of the male superintendent. To learn of the success of the experiment we sought information, by letter, from the superintendent. He replied as follows: "I think I shall answer with sufficient explicitness by saying that after trying the experiment of a female assistant physician for five and a half years, two and a half of which were under my superintendency, both the board of trustees and myself are indisposed to repeat it."† This lady, in the opinion of the board and superintendent, as they would have us to infer, failed to perform satisfactorily the duties which are ordinarily performed in such institutions by young men, some of them just from medical college, profoundly ignorant of disease, and especially of insanity in its varied forms. We hear no complaints from trustees and superintendents against

\* Dr. Mary H. Stinson.

† This answer from the Superintendent, is just what we expected from one opposed to a female assistant physician, placed there by the authority of the State of Massachusetts. The success which attended her efforts—despite obstacles thrown in her way, by one anxious for her failure—during five years, to promote reforms in management and by kind treatment, employment and amusements to bring comfort and, oftentimes, sanity to her unhappy patients, attracted the attention of philanthropists to the great qualifications of medical women to have charge of the female insane; and we may well believe that her success inspired the movement which led the profession in Pennsylvania, to ask for a law, which, would enable female physicians to have charge of the insane of their sex, untrammelled by the selfishness of a Superintendent.—Ed.



*them.* To *them* they assign the management of hundreds of insane females— young, middle-aged, and aged; but this lady of mature years, in the prime and vigor of womanhood, a highly educated physician, filled with deep sympathy for the sufferers, and qualified for her work by previous practice, *we are told* is not fitted for her work! What mysterious qualifications do the young male doctors have to fit them for the treatment of insane females of every age and peculiarity which she does not possess? During the past two years she has been visiting institutions for the care and treatment of the insane in Europe. Perhaps the knowledge thus derived, joined to her previous five years' experience under efficient male superintendents, may yet fit her for a position which has always been so satisfactorily filled by an inexperienced youth. If not, then certainly we shall not claim the place for woman; indeed, it accords with our previous belief that to make woman an assistant to a male superintendent is to do her a great wrong. We regard her as eminently fitted to be the head of the institution for the care and treatment of the insane of her sex.

We will briefly call attention to a few facts. Hitherto all hospitals for the insane in this country have been managed on one common plan. Each has a board of trustees, a medical superintendent, and from one to four medical assistants, a steward, and a matron, all males but the last-named. There are also persons who attend in the various apartments to manage the patients, keep order, and restrain or punish the noisy or violent; and these helpers are of different sexes in the two apartments. The order is as good in the female wards as in the others, which proves that so far as governing and managing are concerned females are as competent as males. The question is then narrowed down to this, Can female medical superintendents and assistants take the place of the present superintendents and assistants with advantage to the female insane of our State? and if so, why has the plan, which was the outgrowth of careful consideration by thoughtful men, been so long followed? To the consideration of these questions we now call your attention.

At the time of founding our first hospitals there was not a single woman learned in medicine; hence a male superintendent was chosen for both sexes, as had been the custom in all countries. But now how changed the condition of society! The aspirations of the human mind may be suppressed for a long time by despotic power, but there comes a day at last when some brave soul calls to its oppressed fellows and leads them on to emancipation. So, twenty-six years ago, one brave woman, Elizabeth Blackwell, of Pennsylvania, rising in the presence of a jeering and scoffing society, demanded that her sisters, the women of Pennsylvania, should have the benefit of instruction in the medical sciences. Through reproach and contumely, through evil report and scorn, she made her unaided way to the side of the most learned medical teachers of the land, an honored graduate of medicine. Inspired by the example of their immortal leader, one by one, tens by tens, and at last scores by scores, followed in her path, until at this time in many of our great cities are to be found female physicians the peers of the most eminent medical men of the age, in knowledge, in skill, and in all that adorns and ennoble the profession. It is this changed condition of society that impels us to ask that female

physicians shall have the entire medical control of the medical and moral treatment of the insane of their sex. And mark! we do not ask that they be *assistants* to a male superintendent—we would not make them thus subordinate. We know too well that the old prejudice still lingers in the hearts of many superintendents, who would then have an opportunity to embarrass their assistant and make her work seem of no effect, and thus to enable him to declare that “neither the trustees nor himself wished to repeat the experiment.” No, we would clothe her with the same power accorded to the male superintendent, then the two departments would stand side by side rival institutions, and we assure you there would be no listless walks through the wards then.

And now of woman's capacity to perform the duties of medical superintendent of a hospital for the insane. Have male superintendents been chosen on account of their greater physical strength, in order that they may grapple with a noisy, violent patient and bind him? We trust that no such mistake has been made. Despite the practice in a neighboring State, where a few heartless officials are still found to approve the application to their helpless victims of the stretcher, the boot-heel gag, and the burning alcohol; and despite the opinions of those who see only the “visitation of God” in the death of the man found dead in the stretcher, his manacled hands in a cross-bar above his head, and his feet chained to the floor; we say, despite the opinions of these people, the world has come to know that pleasant, cheerful surroundings, the gentle voice of kindness, and the assurance to the wicked violators of law, and even to the insane, that no harm will be done to them, are more efficient governing agencies than the cruellest tortures. Thirty years ago there were very few females, save in the Society of Friends, engaged in teaching school. Male teachers were then accustomed to give their pupils the severest drubbings, to subject them to restraints and punishments, oftentimes amounting to torture, under the belief that no other treatment would bring order to the school. This was the almost universal practice in common schools, and even in academies and other high schools; and women were therefore deemed unfit, on account of physical weakness, to have charge of pupils so rebellious. Some of you can remember the abuse lavished on boys, and girls too, and the curses loud and deep which that abuse called forth. Now, those cruel pedagogues are strangers in the land, and our schools nearly everywhere are managed by females. All the appliances of torture and abuse are unknown, and the kindness, attention, and love of female teachers have caused like feelings to grow in the hearts of their pupils. In the old Bethlehem Hospital—the London Bedlam—the most horrible tortures were inflicted on the helpless insane; and, manacled, caged, and filthy, they were exhibited to visitors, that the morbid appetites of the vulgar and ignorant might be gratified. Through long years this treatment continued, indeed down to 1793, when Pinel became chief physician to the Bicetre, in Paris, and substituted kindness for cruelty in the treatment of insanity. He struck the manacles from the poor creatures, and gave to them the kindest treatment, with marked success. But the horrid system of cruelty and violence to a degree continued to be exerted on the helpless insane in prisons and asylums from that time until many years ago, when the gentle and humane Elizabeth Fry pleaded again in the name of justice

and humanity for their release from dungeons and chains and stripes, for kind treatment, for words of consolation and hope and cheer. Her influence has come down to us through this long run of years, gradually ameliorating the condition of the insane and the criminal, but unable wholly to avert the cruelties which despotic power, in the hands of wardens, has frequently inflicted. It is within our recollection when the insane in some of our almshouses were kept caged in dark, noisome cells, naked and filthy, and shown to visitors as pleasing curiosities. Who among us, who of the superintendents, visited these abodes of misery and called attention to the wretched condition of the inmates? None, not one. It was reserved for Dorothea L. Dix—a woman—to arouse the people of Pennsylvania to more humane and greater efforts in behalf of our insane poor. She passed through and through this great Commonwealth, visited nearly every almshouse and hospital for the insane, depicted the atrocities which were daily enacted, appealed to wardens and superintendents for kind treatment, good food, pure air, greater freedom from restraint, and utter freedom from punishment. She appealed to our law-makers for means to provide hospitals, to towns and counties for more generous outlays in behalf of those unfortunates. Thus did she inaugurate the new treatment, the moral treatment of the insane in this and other States, and which is now, to a greater or less degree, the prevailing system everywhere. Who among us has made so many valuable suggestions in relation to sanitary improvements, in reference to management of the insane by kind treatment, by amusements and employment, by good and proper food, by outdoor exercise, and by such conduct toward them as would assure them of the keeper's good interest in their welfare? Who, throughout our State, was not thrilled by the recital of wrongs and outrages inflicted on the helpless poor, as it came from the pen of Miss Dix? Who did not feel all his humanity aroused by her appeals?—appeals wrung from the heart of a good, pure woman by cruelties inflicted on the insane in the name of law and humanity. Shall we be told that such a woman is not competent to be superintendent of an asylum for the insane? Do we hear you say, Women have sympathy and humanity, but in administrative qualities for the management of hospitals they are deficient? By reason of the short time during which women have had opportunity for higher education, and especially medical education, opportunities to show their qualities in that direction have been quite limited, and yet we have a few instances in which their management is shown to be of the most practical and efficient kind. It is only twenty-four years since Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, a native of this region, the first graduated female physician on this continent—shall we not say in the world?—took her diploma in her hand and asked for social and professional recognition from the medical profession, a boon at once denied her. Then alone, sustained by convictions of duty and a fortitude known only to women, she aroused the earnest thinkers of her own sex to join her in the great work—the enlightenment of woman, and her elevation under the law and in the profession to an equality with man. What have been the results of woman's labor in this comparatively short period of time? A Woman's Medical College and Hospital in Philadelphia, rivaling the University of Pennsylvania and Jefferson Medical College in the capacity of their teachers, in the requirements for graduation, and in



clinical instruction to students. In New York, Boston, Chicago, and Cincinnati, colleges and hospitals for the education and treatment of the sex, controlled and carried forward by women, are in successful operation; and, as if in anticipation of and preparation for the great duties to which we believe they should be called—the management of the insane of their sex—they are found in all the homes, reformatories, retreats, and other charitable institutions which so greatly abound in our great cities, bestowing their skill, science, and benevolence on the suffering inmates of those great charities. Wherever the sick, the suffering, the feeble and helpless are gathered, woman is the dominant power in management, the chief dispenser of relief and consolation. From among these earnest workers and physicians could be selected many women richly endowed with the natural qualities, the medical knowledge, and the practical experience which would eminently qualify them for the medical superintendency of the insane of their sex.

We do not disparage the qualifications of male superintendents, or call in question their humanity, but we claim that the heart of woman responds more warmly to the pleadings of those who suffer, and that her devotion and self-sacrifice are instincts as strong as the love of life itself; that her gentleness and care, her pleadings that the troubled soul and mind may be at rest, are more than medicine to the unfortunate insane. Let us not forget the successful labors of Miss Dix—how from one end of the country to the other she moved individuals, communities, legislatures, and governors, to the consideration of the suffering inmates of our hospitals, jails, and almshouses; how, at her bidding, hospitals and asylums sprang up in almost every State in the Union, until now the care and treatment of the insane are earnest questions of the day. No one denies woman's sympathy with the afflicted, nor her capacity to pour consolation into the heart, and light again the soul from which hope has fled; or questions her ability to cope with man in the acquisition of a knowledge of the science and art of medicine: for, has she not this very year, in a fair contest with male aspirants for medical fame, borne the Boylston prize away from Boston, that boasted center of science and literature? But still the question presents itself: Does she join to those qualities the executive ability to have entire charge of hundreds of insane or vicious females?

Who has not read the history of the "Women of the War?" Not those wives and daughters who, from every home on hill-side and valley, from mountain and plain, brought the products of their labor and sent them by hundreds of tons to camps and hospitals for the relief and support of our brave men: but those other women who left the comforts of home, and following the trail of the army, sought out the wounded soldiers, and by day and by night, with a devotion which knew neither rest nor weariness, gave themselves to their humane work. Among this number was Sarah J. Smith, a member of the Society of Friends, who for two years visited camps and hospitals, with her stores of relief. In 1866, after her return, she took charge of "The Home for the Friendless," which she had been mainly instrumental in founding in the city of Indianapolis. During the time she had charge of the Home, between five and six hundred women were under her management. Among these were some who had been discharged from the State prison—their terms of service having expired—but who, on account of disease, were sent to

the Home. The stories those unfortunates told, *as to the cruel licentiousness of a penal institution on the part of guards*, were the starting-point for the establishment of the "Indiana Reformatory for Women and Girls." Mr. and Mrs. Coffin, preachers in the Society of Friends, Governor Baker, and Mrs. Smith, and her friends, were especially active in securing the necessary legislation. This Home, successfully carried on by her for several years to reclaim the fallen of her sex, so attracted the attention of benevolent and influential people that five years ago it became a State institution, both reformatory and penal. In the penal department there are at present forty-nine prisoners, but during the whole time of its existence—now about five years—it has received one hundred and fifty female convicts. In addition to these, but separate from them, the reformatory receives, by direction of various courts, girls under sixteen years of age who have been guilty of vicious or incorrigible conduct. Judges may also, on the conviction of a girl of any crime ordinarily punishable by imprisonment in a county jail, send her to the reformatory, where all must remain until they are eighteen years of age. The entire number of girls committed has been two hundred and sixty-five. Of these one hundred and thirty-five are still there. So in the jail and in the reformatory there are one hundred and eighty-four fallen, vicious, and criminal females. The board of managers consists of Mrs. Eliza C. Hendricks, wife of Hon. Thomas A. Hendricks; Mrs. Rhoda Coffin; and Mrs. Emily A. Roache, the wife of an ex-Judge of the Supreme Court of the State. The superintendent is Mrs. Sarah J. Smith, who has had the charge from the commencement, with a salary of only \$800 per year. Prof. Theophilus Parvin, the physician of the institution during the whole period of its existence, now President of the American Medical Association, thus speaks of Mrs. Smith and her superintendency: "She is a native of England, and originally a member of the Established Church, but connected herself with the Society of Friends because she believed she could find greater freedom, as a woman, for religious activity. Her first work was at Sheffield, as a visitor of the poor, when she was only twenty years old. When twenty-eight she was one of the managers of a home for fallen women in Sheffield. When thirty-two years old—she is now sixty-four—she came to this country with her husband and children, and during two years of our civil war labored in our camps and hospitals. Of her management of the jail and reformatory I can speak intelligently. It has been most ably conducted. Not a single one from the penal department has been recommitted, nor has one escaped. Two prisoners sent from the State-prison to finish their terms of sentence have been recommitted for larceny, but no one originally committed has been returned. Mrs. Smith had peculiar opportunities, discipline, and experience, preparing her for her responsible duties. Besides, she is a woman of quick perception, great will-power and force of character. You ask what punishments? Bread and water and solitary confinement in a room. Even this is not frequent. Her own remark in reference to the work done is appropriate here: 'It is no longer a problem to be solved, as to the power of kindness, with the religion of Jesus, to change the most hardened and degraded.' The matron, Mrs. Johnson, who has especial charge of the prison, also had had great experience, having been in charge of a 'Home for the Friendless' before taking her present place. Constant occupation and religious instruction

have much to do with the orderly character and general contentment of the inmates. I have never heard a vulgar or profane word, or witnessed an indecent act on the part of a single one, in either the penal or reformatory department: yet many of these poor creatures have been basely born and brought up, and have lived in prostitution or other vice." Such is the testimony of the eminent physician so well known to some of you. The three lady managers of this prison, the only one in the world under the entire management of women, bear the following testimony in their report to the Governor of Indiana, in 1877: "The discipline is mild but firm, and by the thorough system which has been established, and the almost ceaseless vigilance of our valued superintendent and her faithful and efficient assistant, this department has been placed on a standard which will compare favorably with any other prison in the civilized world. We have no faith in the permanency of a reformation which is not founded on a Christian basis, a thorough change of heart."

Mrs. Smith, in reply to our inquiries, wrote: "I presume there never was a harder or more degraded lot of prisoners than those we received from our State-prison. Such fighting, swearing prostitutes! Our heart sank at the prospect. Our prison cells all have outside windows, plenty of sun and air; everything clean and neat; white bed-spreads, rooms hung with Scripture pictures, Bibles everywhere; all of which would have been freely exchanged for a chew of tobacco. The very purity of the place annoyed them; but they everywhere met with kindness from women who longed for the salvation of their souls, and who, morning and evening, poured out before them requests to Him who hears and answers prayer. One by one they changed, and the result was obedience to 'rules,' willing labor, most respectful behavior, and prayer for us that we might be blessed. We have forty-nine prisoners; we punish for any breach of rules by sending them to their rooms and keeping them on bread and water until willing to express regrets before the family. The bread and water are taken by our own hands, when a word or prayer often melts them down. Thus far it has always been effectual; but I must confess it is often done from real love for us, which shows the necessity of having matrons with a loving spirit, large faith, and unbounded patience; able to rule themselves, and, above all, filled with the love of souls. This looks a little egotistical, but there is no other way to manage a prison without punishments of the worst kind, they must be kept by brute force or by love, and we think the latter far surpasses the former. All depends on a matron and her assistants. There is no success without real love for the work, and feeling that the soul of the darkest criminal is as acceptable in the Divine sight as our own. We have had some of the very worst criminals in the State, and by kind, Christian influences they have become so changed that we have no fear of again trusting them in society. If woman can accomplish this for the poor criminal, can she not effect the same for the insane? We have one woman for life, who is really insane, and when under the care of men was often tied and badly abused: now, we simply have patience with her, and once a month lock her in her room, and have no further trouble. Our worst case was an opium-eater, of twenty-two years' standing. The physicians thought she could not live, but sympathy, patience, and love overcame all, and she has been doing well for a period of two years. We have seven life-inmates, and though they came to us with most



fearful records, we have no trouble; they are all quiet, peaceable, praying women. Need I say then that I am fully prepared to sanction the introduction of female medical superintendents for the hospitals and asylums for the insane, not only in your State, but in every State? and do not doubt that beneficial results would soon be apparent."

Endora C. Atkinson, Superintendent of the Reformatory Prison for Women at Sherborn, Mass., writes: "This prison was opened the seventh of last November. Thirty-nine women were received at first. Our number to-day is four hundred and sixteen women and forty-five children. All shades of crime are represented, from vagrancy to murder. The length of sentences varies from two months to nine years. The discipline is mild; many privileges are allowed not usual in such places. We have only a few solitary cells, which are used in extreme cases. Deprivation of meals at table and deprivation of recreation are all that are necessary in many cases. Great love and tender sympathy I find the best way of controlling and influencing the hardest cases. I do most sincerely think that these women are much more likely to be reached and reformed under the care of women than under charge of men. We feel greatly encouraged in our work here. Several have left us who are doing well and promise well. To the power of the grace of our Saviour nothing is impossible, and we look hopefully to great results. Time alone can prove that our earnest labors and prayers are not in vain."

Now, in all that these female superintendents have written, they have reference only to the non-medical management of the institutions, the superintendency, for they are not physicians. The physicians have no direction save as physicians. Of the one Mrs. Smith says: "I highly appreciate the services of Dr. Parvin, and wish every institution, insane and criminal, had as good a friend." And Mrs. Anderson says: "Our doctor is a great success."

Contrast the spirit manifested in these letters with the vengeance which calls to its aid the boot-heel gag, the stretcher, and the burning alcohol, and you will see why in the female prisons of Indiana and Massachusetts order and contentment prevail, while at Trenton, New Jersey, the tortures of the Inquisition fail to reform the criminal, while they disgrace the State and bring sorrow to the homes of her people.

While we regard woman—educated woman—as eminently fitted to act as medical superintendent of hospitals for her sex, there at present exists the most urgent necessity for another change of our present system. To our present superintendent is given not only the medical care of the patients, but the entire charge of the whole establishment—not alone of the five or seven hundred men or women, melancholy, demented, epileptic, and acutely insane, but also over the farm, the garden, laundry, dairy, and bakery, the correspondence, receiving and discharging patients, purchasing supplies, etc. How many of those hundreds of patients can have a moment with him? What, with all these duties on his hands, can he know of the condition of those women over whom his young assistant has control?

Are these sad mothers, these loved sisters, these unhappy daughters likely to reveal aught of their condition to this youth? Fancy, if you can, the effect such an assistant would have produced in his efforts to reform and control the persons

with whom Sarah Smith had to labor. Fancy too, if you can, your own mother or daughter taken to a hospital for the insane—how consoling would it be then to know that she was under the kind treatment of one of her own sex, one who, in the language of an eminent female physician, “understands better than men can ever do the conditions of life which underlie a vast amount of feminine ill health, and who can sound the depths of dullness in the kind of life too frequently led by unoccupied women, and understand how destructive it is to nervous health.” To such patients the kind, consoling, sympathizing voice of woman is a blessed balm to the disturbed imaginings, a herald of hope to the despairing mind, an assurance that friends have not all forsaken her. And how readily will she give her confidence to a friend so loving, so unwearied in her ministrations!

I could give instances of women who, from disordered bodily functions, have been the victims of mental or moral delusions, have suffered for months in insane hospitals without having been once spoken to in relation to their physical health, and others who have resolutely refused to communicate their condition to the male physician, but who would have been happy to unburden themselves, to reveal the sufferings of body and the cause of their mental or moral condition to one of their own sex. We are happy to be able to say that, viewing this subject in the light here presented, the most eminent alienist in the State of Pennsylvania—one long connected with a hospital for the insane—a man richly endowed with humanity and kindness, has on several occasions requested eminent female physicians to take charge, for a brief time, of patients in his institution, to gain their confidence, to ascertain the condition of their systems, so that a proper treatment could be instituted. This was noble conduct, the act of a noble man. How loudly does it proclaim the necessity for the change which we urge!

Whenever we have spoken of this subject to members of the profession, even those favorable to our views, the inquiry has met us: “How can this be carried into effect? Can there be two heads to one hospital?” Separate houses for the sexes should hereafter be the rule. We shall demand that hereafter no more hospitals shall be built to accommodate both males and females. But we do not see the least difficulty in having both a male and female superintendent in any of our present institutions. The sexes are entirely separate, under the charge of different assistant physicians, nurses, and helpers, have different yards, and never mingle with each other. The one great error in the organization was in having a common superintendent for both departments, and burdening him not only with the medical treatment, but also the entire management of all the complicated and onerous duties of carrying on the immense establishment. Is it necessary that he shall be thus burdened? Cannot a hospital be managed on some other plan? The Pennsylvania Hospital, in the city of Philadelphia, which receives and treats thousands of patients annually, has no medical superintendent. For more than a century it has moved on without a jar. Not a moment of the time of its skillful surgeons and physicians has been diverted from the care and treatment of the patients by the onerous duties incident to the purely business matters of the large establishment. One non-medical business man—call him steward, warden, superintendent, or whatever else may please—purchases all supplies, receives and discharges

patients, keeps the house in the most perfect order, has everything ready to the hands of the surgeons and physicians, and accounts to the managers, who, in that house, are what the managers should be in every hospital—real superintendents. Sadly have the insane suffered by the inability—we will not say neglect—of the physician to have proper supervision over them, when encumbered by the manifold and arduous duties necessarily devolving on one who has charge of a farm of two hundred acres, forty or fifty cattle, an immense garden, laundries, and bakeries to supply six hundred or more inmates; who purchases the coal, flour, and meats, makes improvements and changes in buildings, hires and discharges the numerous subordinates, listens to complaints, and settles differences among the numerous workmen; duties which would occupy every hour of the best business man. Is there one among you who believes that the physician of a hospital for the insane should be thus loaded with all those duties, to the neglect of his patients, who may be doomed to lives of chronic mania because not properly cared for when first received? Shall the treatment of five or six hundred insane be given over to inexperienced assistants because the chief is busy with duties which need for their proper performance the whole time and attention of a good business man—one, too, who would perform them for one-third the salary given to a superintendent? Our present system is one fatal to good management of the insane, and also to an economical disbursement of the public funds.

We would therefore, even in our present hospitals, dispense with one general superintendent, have one side under the exclusive care of a woman physician, assistants and helpers, the other under the exclusive management of men, the non-medical steward to furnish all supplies under the direction of the managers, to whom, or to the steward, the physicians shall make their wants known, as in the Pennsylvania Hospital.

At Colney Hatch Hospital, in England, the female physician is an independent officer—there is no conflict of authority. There are two asylums under one general management, each superintendent being responsible for his or her separate charge.

We desire to append the following resolution, and ask for its adoption:

*“Resolved,* That a committee of seven be appointed by the President of the Society to memorialize the Legislature to enact laws, if any be needed, to authorize the employment, by managers of hospitals under the control of the State, of women medical superintendents for the female departments of said hospitals, and for hospitals to be erected for the accommodation of females.”

All of which is respectfully submitted.

HIRAM CORSON, M. D.

A. NEBINGER, M. D.

R. L. SIBBETT, M. D.

The President appointed the following persons to memorialize the Legislature in accordance with the above resolution: Dr. Hiram Corson, Montgomery County; Dr. E. A. Wood, Pittsburgh; Dr. R. L. Sibbett, Carlisle; Dr. A. Nebinger, Philadelphia; Dr. Traill Green,



Easton; Dr. I. N. Kerlin, Media, Delaware County; Dr. Benjamin Lee, Philadelphia.

It may be interesting to some, to know, that when the report was presented to Dr. Sibbett for approval, he was dissatisfied with it, and in accordance with the wish of the chairman, attempted to improve it, but found it would involve too much labor, and, therefore, returned it unsigned. It was, then, presented to Dr. Nebinger (the orator against the recognition of women, and who, it was generally believed, had been made a member of the committee to antagonize the over-zealous chairman)—who, when it was read to him, declared he would sign it without the change of a word—or, as he expressed it, “without change of the dot of an i, or the cross of a t.” Dr. Sibbett, too, signed it afterwards. After it was read, by the chairman, to the society at Pittsburgh, in June, 1878, the resolution affixed to it was presented, and by a slender vote was passed; and the president, Dr. Agnew, appointed the committee, whose Report here follows. In order to show that the committee was neither idle, nor neglectful of its duties, the following report was made by the members of it, to the State Society at its meeting held in Chester the following year, 1879.

#### REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY THE STATE MEDICAL SOCIETY, TO MEMORIALIZE THE LEGISLATURE.

At the meeting of the Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania, held in the city of Harrisburg in May, 1877, “a committee was appointed to report on the propriety of having a female superintendent, for the female department, of every hospital for the insane under the control of the State.”

That committee made report to the society at its meeting in Pittsburgh, in May last (1878), and the society, in view of the important truths and facts contained in said report, appointed the undersigned a committee to memorialize your honorable bodies to enact such laws, as may be needed to carry into effect the reforms, or changes in the management of the female insane, which are suggested in that report and desired by your memorialists. Allow us, therefore, to call your attention to a few facts bearing on this subject.

1st, In all hospitals for the insane, in this State, the two sexes are nearly equal in numbers, and are managed on one common plan, viz.: There is a superintendent, who is also the physician of the institution, to whom is confided the entire management of the large farm connected with the hospital, as well as the medical treatment of the hundreds of insane patients entrusted to his keeping. To aid him he appoints two male medical attendants, one of whom has charge of the males, the other of the females.

2d, Until within a very recent period there seemed to be no way to avoid thus placing, under the care of male practitioners, the hundreds of unfortunate females found in our hospitals; but, fortunately, the time has at last arrived, when we have many female physicians, graduates of regularly established medical colleges, and of much experience in treating the diseases peculiar to the sex, who are eminently qualified to have the entire medical and moral care of the female insane.

3d, Even at the present time, the management of the female department (save the medical) is entirely in the care of women, and they have proved themselves as well fitted for these duties as are the males in the male wards. Why, then, should not the medical superintendency be confided to a female physician?

4th, There are many grave reasons, well-known to physicians and fully realized by women, why it is more proper to have female than male physicians in charge of the female insane; and these reasons have great influence in causing the medical society of the State to bring the subject before your honorable bodies.

5th, The ability of women to manage large numbers of insane or vicious and criminal females, is conspicuous in the history of the 'Reformatory Prison for Women,' at Sherborn, Massachusetts, where more than four hundred and fifty females are under the care and management of a female superintendent, physician and attendants.

6th, Accompanying this memorial are copies of the report made to the State Medical Society, by its committee, which justifies us, as we believe, in asking from your honorable bodies such legislation as will make it obligatory on trustees of all hospitals and asylums, for the treatment of female insane, under the control of the State, to appoint a female physician to be the Medical Superintendent of the department for females in the institution.

HIRAM CORSON, M. D., *Ch., Montgomery Co.*

E. A. WOOD, M. D., *Allegheny Co.*

R. L. SIBBETT, M. D., *Cumberland Co.*

A. NEBINGER, M. D., *Philadelphia Co.*

TRAILL GREEN, M. D., *Northampton Co.*

BENJAMIN LEE, M. D., *Philadelphia Co."*

We also prepared and handed to our representative the following "Bill:" entitled,

"*An Act, for the better regulation and treatment of the female insane in the asylums and hospitals of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.*"

SECTION 1. "Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in General Assembly met, and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same: 'That in all hospitals or asylums now built (or hereafter to be built), and under control of the State, and in which male and female patients are received for treatment, it shall be the duty of the trustees of said asylums or hospitals, to appoint a female superintendent—who shall be a skillful physician, and who shall reside in said asylum or hospital, and who shall have the entire medical control of the female inmates.'

SEC. 2. "That said female superintendent, shall be appointed by said trustees for a term of not less than five years, and shall not be subject to removal within that term, except for infidelity to the trust reposed in her, or for incompetency.

SEC. 3. "This Act shall take effect, as to asylums and hospitals already built in one year from the date of its passage.

SEC. 4. "That all acts and parts of acts inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, be and they are hereby repealed."

The Legislative Committee to which these documents were referred, returned the Bill to the House with an affirmative recommendation, not one member dissenting. It was in due time passed finally by the Lower House and sent to the Senate. Until that time it had met with no opposition, but as soon as it was reported to the Senate Judiciary Committee, there was placed in the hands of that committee the following memorial:

*"To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives  
of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.*

"The memorial of the undersigned members of the medical profession respectfully represents,

That they have learned with surprise, of the introduction of a bill into the House of Representatives, compelling the boards of trustees of the different State hospitals and asylums for the insane, to appoint female medical superintendents who are to have entire control of the female patients, and thus be independent of the chief medical officers of these institutions. Believing as they do that having two superintendents, acting independently of each other, in these institutions, cannot but prove detrimental to their best interests and to the welfare of their patients, tending as such arrangement must, to destroy harmonious action, proper discipline and good order, your memorialists trust, that the bill referred to, will not receive your favorable consideration. The views of your memorialists are fully confirmed by all practical experience in the management of these institutions during the last fifty years, and much of the success which has attended them has resulted from a system directly in opposition to the principles of the bill under consideration.

"It is to be observed that the proposed law has no connection with the question of employing assistant female physicians. No additional legislation is necessary to do this whenever and wherever it may be deemed desirable, that being simply a question of expediency, and fully under the control of the Board of Managers of these institutions."

The above memorial was signed first by the author of "Jurisprudence of Insanity,"\* and then by surgeons and assistant surgeons, physicians and assistant physicians, consulting surgeons and consulting physicians, in-door physicians and out-door physicians from institutions in the city, as follows: Blockley Hospital for the Insane, the superintendent and six assistants; Jefferson College, six; Pennsylvania Hospital, twelve; University of Pennsylvania, three; German Hospital, one; Orthopaedic Hospital, four; Jewish Foster Home, one; Episcopal and Women's Hospital, three; Blockley Almshouse, two; Children's Hospital, two; Wills' Hospital, three; St. Mary's Hospital, one; Presbyterian Hospital, one. Many of these persons had so many titles that there was some difficulty in assigning them to the proper place in this summary, but we have done our best, in order to show the influence, which so many titled persons would be likely to have on the Senate Committee. But we must not neglect to say, that in addition to the above, there were the names of nineteen untitled physicians—plain M. D's—several of whom were recognized as justly occupying a high place in the profession. Nor were these all.

\* Dr. Thomas Kirkbride.



The name of the Philadelphia Editor of the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* was among the rest. We are thus particular to show the strong influence, which was arrayed against our modest little bill, lest, if we should fail of success, this society might believe we had failed in faithful performance of duty.

This memorial, brilliant with titles, united to personal representations by those who represented it, led the committee; who had not yet received from the members who had our bill in charge, any representation of our case; to report the bill to the Senate with a "negative recommendation."

Representative Roberts, who had so successfully carried the bill through the House, and those in the Senate who favored our memorial, but were ignorant of what had so secretly been laid before the Senate Committee which had the bill in charge, were greatly surprised at the result. They at once took measures to have the bill recommitted, in order that its friends should be heard. Mr. Roberts and Robert Lamberton, Esq., Attorney-at-Law, a resident of Harrisburg, and for many years a member of the Board of Trustees of the State Lunatic Hospital there, and still one of its most valued members, and intimately conversant with all its workings, and results, and, may we say, its needs, appeared before the committee and made a most exhaustive argument in favor of the bill. They also laid before the committee the following preamble and resolution passed by the Board of Trustees of the State Hospital for insane at Harrisburg, at their meeting in January of the present year (1879), when all the members were present, by a vote of eight yeas to one nay:

"WHEREAS, The State Medical Society at its last meeting, held at Pittsburgh in May last, appointed a committee to memorialize the Legislature to pass laws, if any be needed, to have a female medical superintendent, to have entire medical control and management of every asylum and every hospital for female insane under control of the State; therefore,

"*Resolved*, That we, the Trustees of the State Lunatic Hospital at Harrisburg, being deeply impressed with the propriety of the measure, and believing that many advantages would result to the female patients from the proposed change, do earnestly desire that the honorable Senators and Representatives will, in their wisdom, enact such laws, as will enable the proposed measure to be carried into effect, as soon as it can, conveniently, be done."

This appeal from eight out of the nine of the Trustees of the oldest hospital for the insane in the State, and located within view of the Capitol, in accord as it was, too, with the memorial of the society, joined to the personal representations of one of the most efficient members of the board of trustees,\* could not be disregarded, and the Senate Committee when last heard from by us, had concluded to suspend judgment in the matter, until another opportunity could be had, by the opposition, to offer their remonstrances. This was the point at which they had arrived last Saturday. We have not since heard from them.

It is well here to notice, that not a single remonstrance against the measures of reform, sought for by this society, came from the people of this great commonwealth,

\*The Robert A. Lamberton referred to, as one of the Trustees of the Lunatic Hospital at Harrisburg, who went before the Committee of the Senate of Pennsylvania in favor of the bill after it had been returned adversely to the Senate, because of the influence of the sixty protesting physicians of Philadelphia, is now Robert A. Lamberton, LL. D., President of Lehigh University.

save only from Philadelphia; nor even from the managers of *her* great charities, nor from her thousands and hundreds of thousands of benevolent private citizens, but alone from a few surgeons and physicians, some of them members of this society.

Signed,      HIRAM CORSON, *Ch.*,  
                  ANDREW NEBINGER,  
                  TRAILL GREEN,  
                  R. L. SIBBETT,  
                  E. A. WOOD,  
                  BENJAMIN LEE.

Such is the report made by us to the State society at its meeting held at Chester, May 21, 1879, while the "Bill" was still in the hands of the Senate Committee, and the efforts of the superintendents of hospitals and their aids, were being exerted for its defeat. After the report had been read, Dr. I. N. Kerlin, one of the committee, presented the following minority report.

*"Minority report of a committee appointed by the State Medical Society to memorialize the Legislature to enact laws, if any be needed, to authorize the employment by managers of the hospitals under the control of the State, of women medical superintendents for the departments for the female insane in said hospitals:*

"The undersigned regrets that he is placed in seeming opposition to the excellent men with whom he was appointed to co-operate.

"The resolution under which this committee was nominated, page 33 of last year's *Transactions* was hastily adopted by a few voices, in the midst of much confusion, when certainly the house was not in deliberative order.

"Your committee of the minority cannot believe that it was the deliberate purpose of the State Medical Society of Pennsylvania to pass over from intelligent and orderly deliberation to accidental, injudicious, and peremptory state legislation, a question that to-day is not settled, but belongs specially to the careful inquiry, and experimental trial of the boards of managers of our various State hospitals, under the assistance and advice of the medical men identified with them.

"Believing that the Pittsburgh session of May 30th was not in business order when this questionable resolution was passed upon; believing that the great majority of the members would have refused their consent to its passage had they understood its bearing, the undersigned would have been pleased to have met the committee for an expression of your dissent.

"The honorable chairman doubtless used his best endeavors to secure a meeting of his committee, and I do not for a moment impugn his motives nor his methods.

"The following is the substance of a letter, addressed, on December 23d to the members of the majority, by the minority. I cannot but believe the position taken corresponds with that of this society:

1st, "The whole matter of the official management of our State hospitals should be left to the adjustment of the appointed managers, and the medical superintendents of said hospitals.

2d, "The expediency or ripeness of the measure, either wholly or partially, contemplated in the resolution of 1878, should be fully discussed in the existing boards of managers and in the association of medical superintendents of the hospitals for the insane.

3d, "If the State society wishes to establish certain procedures, it is wise, prudent, and professional that, before this society shall seek coercive legislation at Harrisburg, to affect radically, and possibly injuriously, the existing organizations of our State hospitals, it shall first confer, through its committee, or otherwise, with the association of medical superintendents, and with the board of management, and endeavor to seek a line of mutual and fair understanding, on which all reasonable men may co-operate.

4th, "Any other course adopted, or allowed by the State Medical Society, is to the mind of this minority, unwise and hasty, when we consider the gravity of the change proposed, and toward that section of our membership, the worthy medical officers of our state hospitals, ungenerous and unprofessional."

After the reading of the Minority Report Dr. John L. Atlee immediately moved "that any further action upon this subject, at this time, is inexpedient and premature;" and in the course of an excited speech said, "there is not a woman physician in the United States competent to perform the duties of chief physician of the female insane." He spoke at great length upon the entire absence of qualification of *women* physicians for the performance of such important duties. Dr. Traill Green, of the committee, replied effectively and a heated discussion by the society was had. After both reports had been received the motion of Dr. Atlee was lost by a vote of ayes 29, nays 37. Then, while our bill was still in the hands of the Senate Committee, confronted by that formidable protest from sixty of Philadelphia's eminent physicians (?), ended the combat before the State Medical Society in 1879.

Before the adjournment of the Legislature our bill was enacted into law, with but a few almost unimportant alterations. The one most to be regretted is the change which does not make it an imperative duty of the trustees to appoint a woman chief physician for the women insane, but merely clothes them with the power to do so.

While these things were happening the thirteen trustees of the "Eastern Hospital," at Norristown, were rapidly preparing for the opening of that new institution—built on a plan quite different from



that of the other State hospitals for the insane—and in the management of which the trustees had absolute control given to them by the “act” establishing the hospital, while in the other State hospitals the superintendent, or chief physician, had exclusive power in the management of the hospital and everything connected with it; the board of trustees being merely an advisory or, shall I say ornamental, body.

The trustees of the Eastern Hospital, at Norristown, appreciating the growing sentiment in favor of women physicians for the women insane, unanimously elected Dr. Robert H. Chase chief physician for the department for males, and Dr. Mary H. Stinson, a graduate of the Woman’s Medical College of Philadelphia, (who had previously been assistant physician during five years in the State Lunatic Hospital at Worcester, Massachusetts,) chief physician for the department for women. On account of impaired health and a desire for rest, Dr. Stinson declined the appointment—an appointment never before offered to any female in this or any other country, to our knowledge.

At the next meeting of the Eastern Hospital trustees, Dr. Alice Bennett, of New England, a graduate of the Woman’s Medical College of Philadelphia, was elected *chief physician* of the department for insane females—to have the entire medical control. Dr. Annie Kugler was appointed assistant, and these two women doctors began their labors in this new hospital. The patients came in squads from the alms houses of the counties constituting the district, and by fifties, almost by hundreds, from the over-crowded hospital for insane at Blockley, Philadelphia—until at this time more than 700 are there under the care of Dr. Bennett and her assistants. The opening of this hospital was in July, 1880. Now Dr. Bennett has two assistant physicians, and the hospital, in all things that pertain to the health, comfort and management of the patients, is not surpassed by any one in the world. The fitness of women doctors to have charge of the medical management of the insane of their sex has been grandly illustrated in the Eastern Hospital, under the *exclusive* care of Dr. Bennett, the first woman who ever undertook such a duty.

In September, 1880, nearly three months after the election of Dr. Bennett, the trustees of the Lunatic Hospital at Harrisburg elected Dr. Margaret Cleaves (who had previously had experience as an assistant physician in Iowa,) physician of the department for insane

women, in place of the former male assistant—but *subject to the supervision and direction of the male physician, or superintendent as he is called*. She served until September, 1883—a period of three years—and when she resigned, was succeeded by Dr. Jane Garver, who still holds the position.

How humiliating is the position of these women doctors when compared with that occupied by Dr. Bennett! The trustees could do no better. The organic law establishing the hospital thirty years ago compels the trustees to elect a chief physician, termed superintendent, for ten years, and gives to him exclusive control of the whole establishment, indoors and out, with the farm of two hundred acres. So it is with every State hospital for insane in Pennsylvania, save the Eastern.

It is full time that efforts were being made to change that law and to have all hospitals governed by trustees, and the physicians relieved of all duties save the medical management of the patients.

Is it not surprising that thirteen men, some chosen by the commissioners of the seven counties composing the "district," some appointed by the Governor and others by judges of the courts of Philadelphia, strangers almost to each other, should have seen eye to eye and have joined hand to hand in this their new work, and have been of one mind in giving to women physicians the before unheard of privilege to prove to the world their fitness and capacity for these important duties! No where else in the civilized world are insane women under the exclusive care of physicians of their own sex. In no other hospital, the world over, have insane women been so kindly treated and the *diseases so peculiar to the sex* so carefully, so successfully managed; indeed it is now well known that the diseases alluded to have not been treated at all in hospitals under the care of male superintendents.

It is not yet eight years since the organization of the Eastern Hospital, and yet the success of this institution, with its more than sixteen hundred insane inmates, managed by Trustees—instead of a Superintendent—and with its medical officers free from all other duties than those pertaining to the welfare and medical care of the insane, commands the admiration of Alienists at home and abroad. The Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania may well be proud of the part which it has borne in procuring the reforms, which are, in it, so grandly manifested.







